



# State Emergency Response Commission

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Emergency Management Division  
Washington Military Department

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## Background

On December 4, 1984, a cloud of poisonous gas leaked from a Union Carbide chemical plant in Bhopal, India, killing more than 2500 people and injuring tens of thousands. On October 17, 1986, the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA) was signed into law to prevent a similar catastrophic event from occurring in the U.S. One part of the SARA provisions is Title III: "The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986." Title III establishes requirements for federal, state and local governments, and industry regarding emergency response planning and community right-to-know on hazardous chemicals.

In 1988, the State of Washington adopted SARA Title III law and regulations. A State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) was created with representatives from Department of Ecology, Washington State Patrol and Emergency Management Division (EMD). As a State SARA Title III agency, EMD serves an administrative role under the responsibilities designated by WAC 118-40-060. Most of the paperwork, tracking of reports, overall coordination, and oversight of Title III is the responsibility of EMD.

## Purpose

"The purpose of the SERC is to develop and support programs of state and local governments and local university sponsored programs which are designed to improve emergency planning, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery capabilities with special emphasis associated with hazardous chemicals." Specific responsibilities of the SERC include, but are not limited to, the following duties:

- Receive and record verbal emergency toxic chemical release reports.
- Designate local planning districts and provides assistance to the Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) in the development of an emergency response plan for their district
- Set up community EPCRA education and training program addressing mitigation, emergency preparedness, disaster response, and long-term disaster recovery

## Goals

The goals of the State Emergency Response Commission are to:

- Help each Tribal Emergency Response Commission (TERC) and Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) to complete a hazardous materials emergency response plan
- Plan for chemical emergencies
- Provide hazardous chemical inventory reporting
- Provide toxic chemical release reporting procedure

## Contact

For additional information, please contact Mark Ligman, SERC/LEPC program coordinator, at (253) 512-7069, or e-mail [m.ligman@emd.wa.gov](mailto:m.ligman@emd.wa.gov).